



INITIATIVE KNOWLEDGE FOR DEVELOPMENT

2nd CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO INCREASE
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN AFRICA
JOINTLY WITH PORTUGUESE INSTITUTIONS AND
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (AKDN)

ESTABLISHED UNDER THE PROTOCOL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC AND THE
ISMAILI IMAMAT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF MAY 2016

1. General Information

Recognizing the long effort of the Ismaili Imamat to foster the welfare of people in Africa as well as the large experience of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in building scientific, technical and social science & humanities research and strengthening the Quality of Life (QOL) in Portugal, Portuguese-Speaking African Countries (PALOP) and elsewhere in Africa, and having in mind the Global Science Agenda, launched by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT, I.P.) in 2009, as well as the establishment of the “International Centre for Advanced Training of Scientists from Portuguese-Speaking Countries in area of Basic Sciences” under the auspices of UNESCO, both aimed to enhance and strengthen scientific skills and capacities in the framework of sustainable international scientific co-operation - the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education and the Ismaili Imamat established a [Protocol of Co-operation on Science and Technology](#).

In order to implement the Agreement of Co-operation, the FCT, I.P. and the AKDN hereby launch a call to increase the funding of collaborative research projects between Portuguese, African Countries and AKDN institutions aiming to advance academic, scientific, technological and social science & humanities co-operation with developing countries and regions by promoting research capacity, targeting established and promising researchers, addressing timely topics of global importance. These projects aim to foster the welfare of people in African Countries, and build scientific, technical, social science & humanities research towards advances in QOL in Africa.

The present call is open to new collaborative research projects between Portuguese, African Countries and AKDN research and academic institutions, in order to help develop initiatives that can have a meaningful impact in consolidate research capacity in Africa.

2. Schedule

This call will be open from the 10 May 2019 until 17h00 (Lisbon time) of the 30 September 2019.

Tentative calendar:

- Evaluation period: 1st Stage: October–December 2019 (external experts); 2nd Stage: mid-January-February 2020 (JRAC meetings)
- Decision communication and contract signature: From March 2020



3. Call Topics

This Call for Proposals is established under the following main guidelines:

- a) Proposals are accepted **in all scientific topics identified in the Protocol** encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration, and securing resources of sufficient amount and duration to permit meaningful impact in Portugal and in Africa:
 - i. Topics eligible for Collaborative Research should emphasize emerging issues under the QOL concept, including, but not limited to, food security and biodiversity, early childhood, habitat, sustainable energy systems and urban development, poverty alleviation, and resettlement of migrants, civil society and pluralism;
 - ii. Specific proposals may be developed to foster research on the Portuguese archives of Indian Ocean migration and trade, which could benefit QOL by enriching understanding of cultural and economic history and pluralism;
 - iii. Translational and clinical medical research will be considered through targeted actions and field research in Africa, in such areas as neuroscience and cancer.
- b) Proposals are accepted **exclusively to help develop new initiatives and collaborations** between academic and scientific institutions from Portugal, African Countries and AKDN, in order to lead to scientific capacity building in those countries.

4. Expected Impact of the Call for Proposals and the strengthening of a network of collaborative research institutions in Portugal and in Africa

This call and the Agreement referred above aim to advance academic, scientific, technological and social science & humanities cooperation between research and academic institutions from Portugal, African Countries and AKDN by promoting research capacity, targeting established and promising researchers, addressing timely topics of global importance, encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration, and securing resources of sufficient amount and duration to permit meaningful impact in those African countries.

These objectives may contribute to the overall commitment established by the Portuguese Government, through FCT, I.P., under the “International Centre for Advanced Training of Portuguese speaking researchers in Basic Sciences”, an UNESCO Type II Centre, enabling the centres and institutions involved in the proposals approved under the present Call may be invited by FCT, I.P. to contribute to the International Centre and help build an effective collaborative research network to promote research capacity in Africa and with strong local and endogenous roots in local activities.

5. Funding budget

Each of the projects approved under the present Call for Proposals will be funded up to a maximum of 250.000,00 € for a maximum period of 36 months.

The overall amount of funding available under the present Call for proposals amounts to a maximum budget of 2.500.000,00 €, following the terms of Clause 5 of the Protocol of Cooperation between the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education of the Portuguese Republic and the Ismaili Imamat on Science and Technology, as signed in May 2016.

The funding made available through the present call need not represent the total budget of the proposal. This implies that each proposal could have additional funding (a co-funding scheme), combining other national or international funding sources.

6. Criteria of the beneficiaries' eligibility

The following institutions from Portugal, African countries and AKDN from all over the world are eligible for funding: higher education institutions, their institutes and R&D centres; Associated Laboratories; State Laboratories; private non-profit institutions that carry out science and technology activities; non-governmental organizations with social purposes (ONGs); companies, if within projects led by R&D institutions of public or private non-profit character; other public and private non-profit institutions that carry out or participate in research activities.

The Portuguese beneficiaries must fulfil the eligibility criteria defined in Article 3 of the [Regulation on Projects Funded Solely by National Funds](#).

7. Criteria of the projects' eligibility

Projects eligibility criteria are displayed in Article 6 of the [Regulation on Projects Funded Solely by National Funds](#).

Additional eligibility criteria:

- a) Each proposal must involve at least one Portuguese institution, and one institution from an African country;
- b) Each consortium has to nominate one Researcher in Charge (Coordinator) from a Portuguese Proposing Institution (PI), who shall be co-responsible for the proposing institution, the application, project direction, fulfilment of aims proposed and of rules underlying the granting of funds, and represent the consortium towards FCT, I.P. and AKDN;
- c) The proposal must be submitted in English and only via electronic form by the project's Coordinator (see point 11. Submission of applications), to which it shall be attached the mandatory documentation indicated in point 18.
- d) The proposal must provide a technical characterization and a substantiated budget with a cost structure appropriate to the aims pursued;
- e) The proposal must provide a plan of disclosure of outputs and dissemination of knowledge and, when applicable, a strategy of knowledge transfer;
- f) The project must have a maximum duration of 36 months;

The implementation of the project must begin within 3 months of the communication of the financing decision, except in duly justified and authorized situations.

8. Form of support

Funding will be provided with a maximum of 250.000,00 € for each project. Supports to be granted are non-refundable.

Payments made directly or indirectly to Portuguese companies through the PI cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the company shareholding, and in the case of non-fulfilment of the thresholds foreseen by Regulation (EU) no. 1407/2013 of 18 December, applicable to Minimis Aids, they must meet the conditions set out in Regulation (EU) no. 651/2014, of 16 June (General Block Exemption Regulation, RGIC) for the exemption of notice foreseen in no. 3 of article 108 of the Treaty to be present.

9. Eligible expenses

The following expenses are eligible:

- a) Direct Costs:
 - i. Expenses with human resources dedicated or related to the development of R&D activities related to the project execution in all mandatory components by the applicable labour legislation, including charges with grant holders directly supported by the beneficiaries;
 - ii. Expenses with missions in the country and abroad, and directly attributable to the project;
 - iii. Acquisition of scientific and technical tools and equipment, indispensable to the project if used within the project during their useful life time;
 - iv. Amortization of scientific and technical tools and equipment indispensable to the project and of which the useful life time falls within the execution period, but does not end within that period;
 - v. Subcontracts directly related to the project scientific tasks' execution;
 - vi. Expenses related to the national and foreign record of patents, copyrights, usefulness models and drawings, national models or brands when related to other forms of intellectual protection, namely rates, researches to the status of the technique and consulting expenses;
 - vii. Expenses with the demonstration, promotion and disclosure of project's outputs, namely dissemination fees within the fulfilment and pursuant to national policies of open access;
 - viii. Acquisition of other goods and services directly related to the project execution, including costs with consultants that do not establish subcontracts;
 - ix. Other direct costs such as charges for financial services, reports, or audit certificates;
- b) Overheads or indirect costs, up to 7% of the total direct costs.

10. Non-eligible expenses

The non-eligible expenses are the ones mentioned in n. 1 of Article 9 of the [Regulation on Projects Funded Solely by National Funds](#).



11. Submission of applications

Applicants must fill the Application Form, which must be submitted in English. It should be presented as a unique research project with the required documents requested. The application form must be submitted in the following link: https://concursosfct.formstack.com/forms/aga_khan_2019

The documentation indicated in Point 18 should also be submitted jointly with the application form.

Proposals submitted by any other means will not be accepted. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

12. Verification of eligibility of applications

FCT, I.P. will assess the proposals to ensure that they meet the eligibility formal criteria. Proposals not meeting the formal criteria will be rejected. Proposals passing the formal check of eligibility will be forwarded to the reviewers for evaluation.

13. Evaluation

The project should have demonstrable impact to foster the scientific capacity and ensure sustainable development and QOL in Africa.

Review

Proposals will be evaluated through a competitive process that will consider the scientific merit and the relevance of the proposal, jointly supervised by FCT, I.P. and AKDN (Joint Implementation Committee of the Protocol-JIC).

The *Joint Research Assessment Committee for Collaborative Research (JRAC)*, composed of internationally recognized scientists chosen for their expertise in priority areas defined in the Protocol of Cooperation, will evaluate the proposals submitted in response to this expression of interest.

The review of proposals will follow a two-stage process:

Stage 1 - Peer Review: in order to assure that all scientific domains of the proposals are covered in the evaluation, two external experts will remotely review the proposals and rate them according to the criteria and scores displayed below. FCT will prepare the assignment of external experts to the proposals and will centralize the contact with the experts to facilitate and coordinate their participation. Once all experts' evaluation reports are received by FCT, a ranking list will be elaborated considering the following premises:

- A maximum of 5 points for each criteria is allowed (half-points are allowed).
- The final score of each proposal is the average of the classification given from both experts.
- A ranked list is produced (maximum score = 15).

Stage 2 – JRAC Review: only the top 20% of the total number of eligible proposals will be evaluated by the JRAC. Proposal(s) with an equal rating to the last proposal(s) above the threshold will also be evaluated by the JRAC. The JRAC will collectively evaluate the top ranked proposals from Stage 1, analysing and discussing each proposal in a wide-ranging / broader perspective. The JRAC, by consensus, will give only a single mark (between 0-5) to each proposal, considering several aspects within the overall purpose of the Protocol of Cooperation: the comments from external experts; their own judgment on the 3 criteria; and other broader aspects such as (i) the project’s potential to have an impact on improving the QOL in Africa, (ii) the distribution of the proposals by scientific area and African region /country and (iii) the wide range of distribution between PI’s and Portuguese institutions (and their regional location).

Final results: The final classification of each proposal is the result of the sum of the marks given in Stages 1 (max. 15 points) and 2 (max. 5 points), resulting in a final classification up to a maximum of 20 points. An evaluation report will be elaborated for each proposal. Based on the recommendation of the JRAC, the JIC members will propose the final list of proposals to be funded.

Evaluation criteria

Criterion 1: Scientific quality and originality

- Scientific and technical quality;
- Innovative potential, novelty, originality;
- Feasibility of the proposal as described by work plan;

Criterion 2: Potential impact on Quality of Life in Africa

- Relevance of the research question to the aim(s) of the expression of interest, to improve quality of life in Portugal and in Africa;
- The feasibility of producing within five years results that could have a meaningful impact in Africa, and be applicable elsewhere in developing countries and regions.
- Plan of action for the establishment of networks of researchers and research cooperation between Portugal and African Countries;
- Potential future achievements/deliverables demonstrating the added value of the future cooperation, namely in terms of the development of local African Research.
- The inclusion of an AKDN partner is an added-value.

Criterion 3: Quality of the R&D team and efficiency of the proposal

- The competence and record of success of researchers committed to the work;
- The level of mutual participation and commitment offered between Portuguese researchers and those in African institutions;
- The appropriateness of the budget proposed (adequacy of project work plan, time schedule, budget);



Score definition

5 = excellent: clear recommendation for funding;

4 = very good: very strong strengths but with room for feasible improvement of certain aspects;

3 = good: some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses with the need of significant improvements;

2 = fair: proposal broadly addresses the criteria, but has significant weaknesses;

1 = poor: clear recommendation for rejection, as at least one of the major aspects is missing or strongly underdeveloped;

0 = missing/incomplete information: the criterion cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information or the proposal fails to address the criterion

14. Notice of decision proposal, prior hearing, decision, claim

a) Notice of decision proposal

The final results will be announced on the FCT, I.P. website (www.fct.pt) and in writing to the Coordinators, including a summary of the written statements (final evaluation report), produced by the JRAC.

b) Prior Hearing

The Coordinator can, if he/she wishes to do so, state his/her opinion on the decision proposal within ten business days counting from the decision proposal notice, and submitted to programa.agakhan@fct.pt. The comments presented by the Coordinator on the final results are assessed:

- i. By the JIC with regard to administrative and/or procedural aspects;
- ii. By the JRAC (and if considered necessary by the JRAC, the external experts) who carried out the assessment with regard to matters of scientific nature.

c) Decision

Projects to be funded will be decided jointly by FCT, I.P. and AKDN, taking in consideration the available budget. After the conclusion of the above mentioned procedures, final decision is written to the Coordinator.

d) Claim

After the decision notice, claims can be submitted to FCT, I.P. (programa.agakhan@fct.pt), which will articulate with JIC if necessary, within 15 business days.

The claim is analyzed:

- i. by the JIC with regard to administrative and/or procedural aspects;
- ii. by the JRAC, which can nominate other independent experts, with regard to the scientific merit which can recommend the maintenance or a change of the decision in a duly justified manner.

Confirmation of the presence of gross errors or negligent acts is the basis for the change of decision. The experts panels mentioned in b) must also elaborate a Final Report including outputs, critiques or recommendations that can contribute to improving the assessment system. The Final Report must identify all conflict of interest situations verified during the panel operation.

FCT, I.P. communicates the final decision on the claim process results to the Coordinator.

15. Acceptance document and start date of projects

The Coordinators of the selected projects and their home institutions must sign the **Terms of Acceptance**, in accordance with the following procedures:

- a) The notice on the project's funding decision is made to the PI and/or to the Coordinator within a maximum of 15 business days after knowing about the final decision approval pursuant to the previous article.
- b) With the funding decision notice sent to the PI and to the Coordinator, the **Acceptance Document** is returned to FCT, I.P. within 30 business days, signed by those who have legal capacity for binding the PI and the Participating Entities, as well as by the Coordinator, being that this deadline can be extended if the PI provides FCT, I.P. grounds for such extension.
- c) A **Protocol** concluded between the co-promoters involved, who have funding from FCT, I.P., or their own funding, must be provided up to the time of signing the acceptance document, explaining the cooperation scope of the entities involved, the PI identification, the joint responsibility, the parties rights and duties and, if applicable, issues related to confidentiality, intellectual property and the end ownership of goods and products acquired and developed during the project's execution.
- d) Non-return to FCT, I.P., of the duly signed Acceptance Document and the protocol mentioned in the previous number, and within the period mentioned in no. 2, when applicable, and for reasons attributable to the Proposing Institution determines the expiry of the support granting decision.
- e) The project's starting date cannot exceed 90 consecutive days after the date of the notice related to the funding decision to the Coordinator and PI, except in situations duly justified to FCT, I.P..

16. Payments

- a) An advance payment of 30% of the funding approved for the project is made to the PI by FCT, I.P., within a maximum of 30 business days after the date of reception of the Acceptance Document.

- b) The PI receives the remaining payments on a yearly basis, after the completion of the following procedure:
- i. Project year 1 – 30% of the approved funding will be paid following the reception and validation of a proof of audit to the project expenditure (financial report) and a scientific progress report;
 - ii. Project year 2 – 30% of the approved funding will be paid following the reception and validation of a proof of audit to the expenditure (financial report) and a scientific progress report;
 - iii. Project year 3 – 10% of the approved funding will be paid following the reception and validation of a proof of audit to the project expenditure (final financial report) and a final scientific report.

The financial control of the approved projects will be assured by a project audit related with the grant compliance, on the responsibility of the PI, whose results should be analyzed by FCT, I.P./JIC between payments and in the end of the project.

In cases of non-execution of the granted funding, verified in the Audit Certificates, FCT, I.P. will request the missing amounts.

The above-mentioned reports should be submitted to programa.agakhan@fct.pt.

Note: An Audit Certificate (proof of audit to the project expenditure) is required to accompany the Progress Report - the audit is mandatory, and audit-related costs are eligible according to Point 9.

17. Application of the FCT, I.P. national rules for funding of scientific and technological, and social science & humanities research projects

This call must follow the rules indicated in this notice. With regard to specific rules or regulations, FCT, I.P. national rules for funding of scientific and technological and social science & humanities research projects (<https://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/regulamentofundospnacionais.phtml.en>) will apply, including the Budget execution norms, and diffusion and information norms for nationally Funded Projects (<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/regulamentos.phtml.en>).

18. Documentation to be presented

The following documents are to be jointly submitted with the application:

- **Declaration of Commitment** duly completed, signed by the Coordinator and the Portuguese Proponent Institution - Please find the Declaration of Commitment form in the "Call Documents" in the yellow box on the right
- **Timetable** for the proposed activities
- Project **budget** - Please find the budget form in the "Call Documents" in the yellow box on the right.



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



19. Contacts and Technical Support

The correspondence between the Coordinator and FCT, I.P. concerning technical support for this call will only be accepted and considered valid if directed to the following email account: programa.agakhan@fct.pt.